

Division of Licensed Resources

October 17, 2000

Goal of the review Increase safety, enhance accountability, and improve customer service

Time frame September 1999 to present

Background The reviews took place following an increase in complaints alleging lack of sensitivity and failure to inform

Licensing and investigations were taking too long, and backlogs were increasing

Scope of the review Division initiated a review of a random sampling of licensing cases, and so far has covered at least 10 percent of the cases in four regions of the state

Random reviews will soon be conducted in regions 1 and 6
(Eastern Washington and Southwest Washington)
Health & Safety reviews were done in all six regions

Summary of findings Review of Yakima foster home licensing files reveals good licensing practices

Reviews of Snohomish County and Pierce County licensed providers who have one or more Child Protective Services referrals reveals good licensing practices

Review of King County licensing files indicated need for systematic change

Actions resulting As a result of the systematic problems with licensing in King County, a compliance plan was developed and immediately implemented by the division management [as a result, 15 licensed homes were closed, and 25 licensed homes were required to comply with corrective actions plans to maintain licenses]

Division of Licensed Resources created individual contracts with workers to eliminate the investigation backlog; set completion targets to reduce licensing backlog

Developed new tracking systems for licensing actions and closures

Emphasized the number of health and safety reviews completed

Held statewide "Best Practice" conference with all licensors

Created a customer service program with contributions from all levels of the division

Scheduled foster parent focus groups for multiple sites in all regions

Formed work groups to address top five issues raised by foster parents at the focus groups

Other results Compliance Plan in Region 4 (including King County) improves safety for children

Licensed providers now endorse the use of focus groups to improve communication

Customer service cards are tracked by Division of Licensed Resources, to address recurring licensing issues or patterns

[For more information about the statewide review of child safety in foster care, see: "Chronology: Division of Licensed Resources," October 17, 2000, and "Regional Focus Groups: Foster Care Issues."]